

Youth Smoking Rates Down!

Since 2000, youth smoking rates in Montana have declined significantly – *from 27% to 17%*.

The GOOD News...

- ⇒ The rate of smoking among Montana youth declined from 19% in 2004 to 17% in 2006.
 - This recent decline in youth smoking is equal to an estimated 1,100 fewer kids who smoke.¹
 - For every 1,000 kids who don't start smoking, total future lifetime healthcare costs decline by at least \$16 million.
- ⇒ Youth smoking rates have dropped dramatically since 2000, when 27% of Montana youth smoked.²
 - This decline over six years represents an estimated 6,718 fewer teen smokers.³
 - The savings in future health care costs amount to more than \$100 million.⁴
 - At least 6,600 fewer of Montanans will die from smoking-related illnesses.⁵
- ⇒ The overall trend of decline in youth smoking in Montana can be attributed to the consistent support Montana citizens have shown for policies that reduce tobacco use: higher tobacco taxes, smokefree indoor air, tobacco-free schools, and funding a comprehensive tobacco use prevention program.
- ⇒ Every dollar spent on comprehensive tobacco control programs saves an estimated \$2 to \$3 in future health care costs.⁷

Remaining Challenges

- Smoking increases with age among youth. Although the overall rate of smoking is at an all-time low, **nearly one quarter of Montana teens are smokers by the time they leave high school.**
- **More than one quarter of Montana high school senior boys use spit tobacco**, putting themselves at risk for tobacco addiction, oral cancer and other illnesses.
- **The tobacco industry continues to target youth** by creating and selling products like candy-flavored tobacco and little cigars, whose flavor and packaging is attractive to younger buyers.
- **The tobacco industry spends nearly \$50 million annually marketing products in Montana**, with special emphasis on sponsorship of events frequented by children and teens, like county fairs and rodeos.
- For cigarette brands that youth most frequently smoke (Marlboro, Newport, and Camel), **the tobacco industry has significantly increased nicotine content, the most addictive component**, between 1998 and 2004, making cigarette addiction among Montana teens a greater threat than ever before.⁸

¹ This figure is based upon a conservative estimate generated by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids; every 1% decline in the overall youth smoking rate represents 550 fewer youth smokers in Montana.

² Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, *Montana Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA)*, 2000 – 2006.

³ Figure based on estimated 2000/01 enrollment of 62,207 8th – 12th graders and estimated 2005/06 enrollment of 59,285 8th – 12th graders.

⁴ Based on CDC estimate of smoking-caused health care costs, *Sustaining State Programs for Tobacco Control: Data Highlights 2006*. (6,718 fewer teen smokers x \$17,500 estimated lifetime smoking-related health care = \$117,565,000)

⁵ CDC, State Highlights 2006, "Projected Smoking-Related Deaths Among Youth – United States"

⁶ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2006, "Projected Cost Savings and Health Benefits from Montana Making Adequate Investments to Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use."

⁸ Massachusetts Tobacco Control Fact Sheet, 2006, "Changes in Nicotine Yield: 1998 – 2004"